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THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 3, 2016

Adding jobs to Niagara

GE Canada expected to add
220 jobs by 2018.
Page 2

Brock talks Zika

Mosquitoes found in Windsor tested for
diseases.
Page 3

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Artistic expression

Darian Poisson from the Port Colborne area works on a piece in the alley between James St. and Garden Park as part of the Graffiti Jam that was being held Sunday. The alley is opened up for artists in an effort to stem tagging in the city and add colour to an otherwise bleak path.



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Keynote speaks to Niagara's impressive GE wooing

DON FRASER
Postmedia Network

Speedy Niagara collaboration was cited as crucial to a decision by a major manufacturer to build a large plant here.

Last Thursday, Jeremy Amin, regional manager of General Electric Canada spoke at the Niagara Economic Summit about what sent the company to Welland.

The chosen site, on Highway 140, is expected to add 220 jobs and be fully operational by 2018.



In a matter of a couple of days, they produced an incredible GE-focused marketing package tying in our 'brilliant' factory tagline to all of the regional capabilities."

Jeremy Amin, regional manager of global operations at General Electric Canada

Using the latest technology, it will initially be manufacturing products and parts for GE Power's reciprocating gas engines, components for compression, mechanical drive, power generation, and its transportation diesel engines.

"From our perspective, the



Mike Watt, left, of Walker Industries chats with Jeremy Amin, regional manager, global operations properties, GE Canada, as part of the fireside chat at the Niagara Economic Summit at White Oaks in Niagara-on-the-Lake last Thursday.

future of Niagara is bright, quite brilliant, and GE is excited to be a part of it," he told the crowd of about 340 at White Oaks in Niagara-on-the-Lake.

This year's annual summit brought together regional leaders in business, government, not profits and others and was hosted by the Greater Niagara Chamber of Commerce.

In his keynote speech, Amin spoke about his company's Welland facility, to be one of GE's high-end "brilliant" sites.

Amin, said "collaboration, speed and people," helped swiftly push the process along.

The journey, which took place over the past year, "was

the result of an incredible hard work and networking on the Niagara economic development (teams) ... they used their extensive networks relentlessly pursuing an opportunity to meet with the GE team on this project," he said.

He said up to that point, Niagara had not been on the GE radar.

"The entire group was working together in a united manner to be successful in this project," Amin said, "in a matter of a couple of days, they produced an incredible GE-focused marketing package tying in our 'brilliant' factory tagline to all of the regional capabilities."

The teams, that included Niagara Region, City of Welland, the province and others, helped with that smooth and open process.

Overall, "there was a sense of urgency," he said in that "one-team approach" in Niagara.

He said GE would also not listen to any "noise from independent municipalities lobbying for their own interest."

It was quickly determined "Niagara was a great opportunity for us," he said.

He also spoke warmly about working with the region's broader business community, development and education community.

GE was also "very excited" about programs at Brock and

Niagara College, Amin added. "They are going to produce graduates with the skills to help advanced manufacturing capabilities, and general business needs, to grow and continue to innovate into the future."

Mike Watt, an executive with Walker Industries, led a discussion afterward.

In one question, Watt asked Amin about potential future expansion plans if the Welland plant proves successful.

"We need to make sure this plant is successful," Amin answered.

He said GE came to the region based on many factors, including its people,

talent and infrastructure to support that.

"As we get settled, and ramp up our production in this first phase of our facility, GE Canada wants nothing more than to expand our footprint."

"We want that growth, we don't know what it's going to look like," he said. "The opportunities come when they come."

Other panelists and speakers discussed misconceptions about Niagara's economy, the regional job market, the skills gap and workers from the Millennial generation.

donfraser@postmedia.com

Region to re-tender insurance contract after review

MARYANNE FRITH
Postmedia Network

Niagara Region's insurance tender will be reissued after review of the procurement process by an independent fairness adviser.

Regional council hired a firm to review the tender for insurance and risk management services earlier this month after a substantive objection was filed by one of its bidders.

The completed report was

presented to council in closed session last Thursday night.

Its content has not been disclosed publicly.

The firm hired to conduct the review, Purchasing Consultants International, was required to have the report finished before the end of the month, as the Region's existing insurance contract is to expire Nov. 1.

After nearly three hours of in-camera discussion, council approved extending its existing insurance contract on a month-

to-month basis for up to three months.

Council will re-tender the Region's insurance contract and retain a fairness adviser to oversee the RFP process.

A fairness adviser will also be hired to oversee implementation of the recommendations of the report received last Thursday, including changes to the Region's procurement bylaw and training for staff as required.

Staff was directed to prepare

a response to the fairness adviser's findings. That report will include "remediating measures," as well as a timeline for their implementation.

There was no discussion regarding the fairness adviser report in open session.

While the review process was underway, PC's president and CEO Stephen Bauld told the Standard all documentation related to the procurement would be reviewed in addition to interviews being conducted

with proponents, staff and anyone else involved with the contract award, including consultants.

Bauld said the process would be reviewed to determine whether the Municipal Act, as well as the Region's own purchasing policies, procedures and bylaws, were followed.

Questions that were raised regarding the insurance tender surrounded an addendum issued two weeks after the closing date and its handling, with

submissions sent in by e-mail instead of in a secure manner.

Council has previously issued that after the insurance issue has been dealt with, there's potential to again hire a fairness adviser to review the recent Humbersone landfill contract, which also received an objection from a bidder complaining about the procurement process.

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donfraser@postmedia.com

Mosquitoes test negative for Zika



(left) Alessio Gasparotto, manager at Entomogen Inc., Dr. Fiona Hunter, prof. of medical entomology, department of biological sciences and Bryan Gironado, PhD candidate, centre for Biotechnology, Brock University, speak to the media about a new type of mosquito discovered by Dr. Hunter during a press conference at Brock University.

JULIE JOCHAN/POSTMEDIA NETWORK

DON FRASER
Postmedia Network

A mosquito species believed responsible for most human cases of Zika virus has been discovered in Windsor.

Windsor-Essex County Health Unit announced the earlier discovery of that Aedes aegypti species last Friday.

Aegypti is a species of international concern because it can also be a transmitter of yellow fever, dengue, West Nile, and chikungunya.

The discovery was made by a team that included the health unit, Public Health Ontario, Brock University and Entomogen Inc.

Those three aegypti mosquitoes — which also tested negative for Zika and West Nile Disease — are believed to be the first time found in Canada.

It happened during surveillance for Aedes albopictus, another invasive species discovered earlier this summer that area.

In a media conference held at Brock last week, Fiona Hunter, professor of medical entomology at Brock's department of biological sciences, said while the location where the two species were found, cold winter temperatures most certainly will kill off aegypti probably also albopictus.

Although albopictus, also known as the Asian tiger mosquito, can transmit viruses including Zika, it's not the species responsible for the majority of human cases of Zika.

"We do not think that this poses any risk whatsoever to people in the Windsor health unit this year," she said of the aegypti discovery earlier this month. "It's the end of the

“We do not think that this poses any risk whatsoever to people in the Windsor health unit this year. It's the end of the season, these aegypti will undoubtedly be killed off with the winter weather.”

Fiona Hunter, professor of medical entomology at Brock's department of biological sciences

season, these aegypti will undoubtedly be killed off with the winter weather.

"We're not 100 per cent sure albopictus will be killed off, so we're working with Windsor health unit in the spring and will resume enhanced surveillance."

Hunter, who is also president of the entomological company Entomogen, said

when albopictus was previously discovered in the Windsor area, a decision was made to do "enhanced surveillance" and that's when the aegypti, also known as Yellow Fever mosquito, were found.

It is believed the mosquitoes found may have been transported somehow to the Windsor area in small

amounts of water contained in a vessel or artificial container, possibly in cargo.

"We expect the mode of entrance into Windsor (for both species) could have come in cargo or somebody's vehicle if they've brought home something from an area where they were present," Hunter said. "We don't know if there are ... separate examples, and we are still looking to see if we can determine the source population."

"This is something of concern and we are keeping our eyes on it," she added.

The Zika virus is spread primarily by bites from infected mosquitoes.

Most people infected suffer a mild and temporary illness, at worst. But infection during pregnancy can cause severe brain-related birth defects.

donfraser@postmedia.com

Health care challenges discussed at chamber breakfast

ALLAN BENNER
Postmedia Network

While the Niagara Health System continues to invest government funding in hospital facilities, it's up to the communities to ensure the latest equipment is available within those facilities.

But that can be a challenge in communities where residents are concerned about plans that call for the closure of local hospitals, said Niagara Health System president Suzanne Johnston.

She was one of a panel of Niagara's health-care providers speaking at a breakfast event organized by Niagara's chambers of commerce last Tuesday looking at the future of health care in the region.

"How the heck are you going to raise funds in a place where nobody really believes in what you're doing?" she said, responding to a question from the audience.

"That is really going to be a challenge for us."

While Johnston said she isn't directly involved in fundraising efforts, she said she still has an important role to play helping the OneFoundation meet the equipment needs of local hospitals.

"It is our intent to be front and centre in our fundraising campaign ... and we will have a tough sell," she said.

However, she said as the community begins to understand the "vast array of services that will be available" if construction of a new hospital in Niagara Falls becomes a reality, "it is my belief that people will start to see, as we work together on that, that it is for the benefit of all."

Johnston was joined by NHS chief of staff Dr. Tom Stewart, Niagara Medical Officer of Health Dr. Valerie Jaeger, Niagara Emergency Medical Services chief Kevin Smith and Ian Hahnel, Integrated Network chief executive officer Donna Cripps for the breakfast meeting called Health Care in Niagara held at Sparrow Lakes Golf Course in Welland.

Story continues on Page 12

We've been thinking about Psalm 23

PASTOR MICHAEL MELED

 Faith & St. Peter's Lutheran
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 Continued from
 September 29.

"He leads me in the paths of righteousness for His name's sake."

As Jesus leads us to the green pastures and still waters, and restores our souls, He keeps us on the narrow path of His righteousness. When Jesus speaks of the narrow gate and the narrow path, He also warns His sheep about false prophets who will rise up, who are wolves in sheep's clothing. Who seem nice and honest, but whose teaching contains the rotten fruit of errors and half-truths (Matthew 7:13-20; see also Luther's Small Catechism 2nd Commandment and 2nd Petition of the Lord's Prayer).

With His word, Jesus keeps us on the path of His righteousness – bringing us to repentance and graciously forgiving our sins – and instructs us to "seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness," (Matthew 6:33).

This is part of the "great exchange" (2Corinthians 5:12). This means that Jesus does not give us what we deserve, but in His baptism and on the cross He exchanges our sinfulness for His righteousness, our death for His life. For His name's sake (on account of who He is and what He has done for us) we are righteous in the sight of the Father and are kept in the path that leads to everlasting life (Romans 8:21-26).

The Lord's name was also placed upon us in Holy Baptism (Matthew 28:19; Acts 2:38). Washed in His blood (Revelation 1:5-6) we have been adopted into His family and made heirs of eternal life (Romans 8:14-17; see also Titus 3:4-7).

"Yea, though I walk through the valley of the



BONICUTOMA - FOTOLIA

shadow of death, I will fear no evil; for You are with me; Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me."

With troubles and torments, evil and death heaped upon us, we may seem to be forsaken by our Shepherd. However, we do not see ourselves the way the world does, but see with the eyes of faith and hear with the ears of faith. We cry out in every trouble, pray, praise and give thanks, for our Shepherd, our loving Saviour is with us and has blessed us with unbreak-

able promises.

"For He Himself has said, 'I will never leave you nor forsake you.' So we may boldly say: 'The Lord is my helper; I will not fear. What can man do to me?' (Hebrews 13:5-6; see also Romans 8:28-39).

We are truly and completely protected by His grace. Read Ezekiel 34:11-16, 23-24 and 1 Samuel 17:34-37. "You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies; You anoint my head with oil; my cup runs over." It is true that we have ene-

mies. The Devil, the world and our own sinful flesh hate us, attack us and want us to reject Christ and be utterly ruined in body and soul. However, our Shepherd, Jesus, spreads before us a table of the finest food. We are honoured guests at this table having our heads anointed with the oil of gladness (Holy Baptism) along with our Saviour (Hebrews 1:9). Ah, the cup of wine which makes the soul glad (Psalm 104:15). It is an overflowing blessing from our God. He is with us and

spreads a feast for us in this world of sin. It is a foretaste of the feast to come. It is the Lord's Supper.

"The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ?" (1 Corinthians 10:16)

Yes it is! Through His Word, Jesus comes into our ears and hearts, giving and strengthening faith through the Holy Spirit. In His holy supper He comes into our mouths

with His real body and blood given and shed for us on the cross. For, He says, "I am the Good Shepherd; and I know My sheep, and am known by My own. As the Father knows Me, even so I know the Father; and I lay down My life for the sheep" (John 10:14-15). The Shepherd becomes "the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world," (John 1:29), and He feeds us with His life.

Continued on Page 5

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I've been thinking about a Bible study

From page 4

"Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life; and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever."

No matter what comes in life we have nothing to fear. Our Lord feeds us with His holy and precious Word, gives us refreshing water to drink as we live in baptismal grace, leads us on the righteous path of the pure doctrine of His holy word, feeds us with His own body and blood, and gives us blessing upon blessing lasting to the end of our earthly days. As God caused David to write in another psalm, "One thing I have desired of the Lord, that will I seek: that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold

the beauty of the Lord, and to inquire in His temple.

For in the time of trouble He shall hide me in His pavilion; in the secret place of His tabernacle He shall hide me; He shall set me high upon a rock. And now let me be lifted up above my enemies all around me; therefore I will offer sacrifices of joy in His tabernacle; I will sing, yes, I will sing praises to the Lord," (Psalm 27:4-6). Goodness and mercy follow us as we dwell in His temple, that is, as we hear and keep His Word and receive all the gifts He lovingly showers down upon us in His Church. Therefore, we praise Him now and forever.

"Then one of the elders answered, saying to me, 'Who

are these arrayed in white robes, and where did they come from?' And I said to him, 'Sir, you know.' So he said to me, 'These are the ones who come out of the great tribulation, and washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Therefore they are before the throne of God, and serve Him day and night in His temple. And He who sits on the throne will dwell among them. They shall neither hunger anymore nor thirst anymore; the sun shall not strike them, nor any heat; for the Lamb who is in the midst of the throne will shepherd them and lead them to living fountains of waters. And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes.'" (Revelation 7:13-17).

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BMX track possible future for 'Mount Welland'

ALLAN BENNER
Postmedia Network

A BMX track could be a future use of "Mount Welland," also known as the Atlas Landfill Site off Woodlawn Road.

At a budget meeting last week, Ward 5 Coun. Mike Petrachenko suggested using \$40,000 of the reserve fund generated through income from that landfill site, to pay for a feasibility study looking at using "Mount Welland" for a BMX park for off road cycling.

The landfill site, developed through a partnership between the city and Walker Environmental and used for contaminated soils and non-hazardous solid waste like construction material, will likely be closed within five years. The municipality needs to determine future uses for the site before that time, because it will have a bearing on how the company closes the site.

Although the city has also submitted a provincial gov-

ernment feed-in-tariff application to add a solar power generation project on the property, city treasurer Steve Zorbas said there's likely enough property to accommodate both the BMX track and solar panels.

"I don't know if I would want to see a BMX track next to a solar ground-mount," Ward 1 Coun. Mary Ann Grimaldi said. "I think we're getting ahead of ourselves here."

Story continued on Page 14



ALLAN BENNER/WEILLAND TRIBUNE

Welland city council is beginning to consider future uses for the Atlas Landfill site, potentially including a BMX track and a solar panel project.

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Early detection still your best chance

ALISON LAWLEY
Postmedia Network

Breast cancer is the most common cancer in Canadian women, with one in nine expected to be diagnosed in their lifetime.

While early detection through mammography can result in increased treatment options and better survival rates, many women avoid getting the procedure.

October is Breast Cancer Awareness Month and women are being encouraged to stay up-to-date with mammograms as part of their routine medical care.

"There are many reasons women are apprehensive about having a mammogram and I think one reason is they are afraid of something being found," Dr. Janice Giesbrecht, medical director of the oncology program at the Niagara Health System, said.

"What we tell people is it's far better to know if there is something and have it checked and find out it is nothing of concern than going on worrying."

Some women put off getting a mammogram out of fear the procedure will be uncomfortable or painful.

A mammogram is an X-ray of the breast and detects any changes that have occurred, even those too small for the average person to feel or see.

During the procedure a plastic plate is slowly pressed down to flatten the breast and hold it in place for a few seconds.

Giesbrecht said by following a few simple steps women can decrease the level of worry and anxiety.

"We want to make it more comfortable for them to come in as opposed to a worry."

Story continued on Page 9



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- Do not use deodorants, antiperspirants, body lotions, or talcum powders before the mammogram. Metals in these products can show up on the X-ray picture.
- Avoid wearing necklaces or long earrings, since metals can show up in the X-ray.
- Keep longer hair tied or pinned up so it's not in the way.
- Most women's breasts are tender the week before and after their period. Book your mammogram for a time when your breasts are not so tender.
- Some women take a mild pain relief pill, such as the kind you would take for a headache, one to two hours before the appointment.
- Only do this if it will not affect any other medicines or any health concerns you may have.
- Some experts suggest having less caffeine for two weeks before the appointment to help reduce tenderness.
- Watch video at hhsshare.ca/2016/10/mammogram-tips/

(Source: Hamilton Niagara Haldimand Brant Regional Cancer Program and Hamilton Health Sciences)

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IN BRIEF

Wainfleet up for consideration in 2021 Canada Summer Games

Wainfleet township council heard a presentation from Matt Hill, director of sport and venues for Niagara's bid for the 2021 Canada Summer Games, which discussed the township's role in "the largest, multi-sport championship within our country".

Hill told council Wainfleet is being considered as a softball venue. This sport, he said, was decided as the best for the township after discussion with staff.

Participants and spectators of the Summer Games would use that venue during the two-week period of the games.

Hill said the games could bring in as much as \$200 million to the region and should see about 25,000 visitors.

Phase two of the bid is coming up with the deadline at the end of January.

Medical marijuana support

Wainfleet briefly discussed and voted upon supporting the city of Port Colborne as it faces the issues brought about by the robbery of the medical marijuana facility back in September.

Council members were in favour of showing their support as Port Colborne deals with the ramifications of the robbery.

Solar energy discussion at township council

Janie Devries, president of National Building Group, came before Wainfleet council to ask for municipal support of a rooftop solar project.

The project is a 100-kilowatt endeavour out on Chamber Road. The facility would be used for equipment storage, shops and offices for National Building Group.

Devries said this would "promote greater use of renewable energy sources."

Council had no questions for Devries.

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MIKE DINIATISTA/POSTMEDIA NETWORK

October was Breast Cancer Awareness Month, and women are being encouraged to stay up-to-date with mammograms. Pictured are Dr. Tom Li, radiologist, and Lisa Perrella, senior technologist, at the GINGH breast screening clinic.

Free breast screening offered in Niagara

FROM PAGE 7

A growing trend is women who make appointments together and "make a date of it."

"Make it something you do together," Giesbrecht said. "Then plan dinner together or something like that afterward."

The same concept can apply to women from different cultural communities who are unfamiliar with the process.

"It can help if they come together as a group, or even ask if people from their church or cultural group can come with them so they can all support each other."

Bottom line, Niagara's top oncologist said, is "just book it."

There has been a dramatic

decrease in breast cancer-related deaths in Canada, the United States and the United Kingdom since the implementation of modern mammography in 1990.

"It's in part due to screening, but also to better treatments of breast cancer. The message is that even if you are diagnosed with breast cancer, you are likely to need less treatment and less surgery. Those are all good reasons to have a mammogram."

Breast cancer does have one of the highest survival rates compared to other cancers, according to Cancer Care Ontario. And mammograms are one of the best and most reliable ways to detect breast cancer early on.

The Ontario Breast Screening Program offers free screening to women ages 50 to 74 with no signs of breast cancer. The program also screens women ages 30 to 69 years who are identified as being at high risk for breast cancer.

The NHS has three full-service OBSP centres and assessment clinics in Niagara Falls, Welland and St. Catharines. Satellite clinics are also available in Port Colborne and Fort Erie.

Women ages 50 to 74 can make an appointment at an OBSP site without a doctor's referral. For more information, call 905-378-4647 or visit www.niagarahcalth.on.ca/en/breast-screening.

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Dr Andrew Taylor passes 100,000 mark in procedures

Lasik ProVision is the Niagara Peninsula's only comprehensive refractive centre which deals with the treatment of common visual disorders. The centre was founded in its current location in 1999 and has evolved to a state of the art refractive centre with a global reputation for the laser correction of nearsightedness, farsightedness



Dr. Andrew Taylor

and astigmatism. It is a world leader in bringing the treatment of Zeiss Laser Blended Vision for the treatment of presbyopic "reading glasses vision" to North America. In addition, the centre specializes in the treatment of cataracts and corneal disorders such as keratoconus.

Founder and medical director, Dr. Andrew W. Taylor, is one of North America's leading ophthalmologists in the use of excimer lasers in refractive surgery. He obtained his medical degree from the University of Toronto in 1991 and went on to complete a specialty residency in ophthalmology, also at the University of Toronto. He then went on to complete subspecialty training

in corneal and refractive disorders. He has completed over 100,000 refractive procedures including lasik, photorefractive keratectomy and cataract surgery to date. In addition to his directorship role at Lasik ProVision, Dr. Taylor is an active staff member of The Niagara Health System in the Department of Ophthalmology.

LasikProVisionhas evolved in its current location from its original incarnation as Lasik Vision, which brought affordable lasik eye surgery to North America. Dr. Taylor restructured Lasik Vision in 2001 as a founding principal and owner of Lasik MD, which then went on to expand refractive clinics across Canada. In 2005, Dr. Taylor left Lasik MD to focus on more customized patient eyecare. In addition to his base clinic in Niagara Falls, he underwent an international expansion to London, England, Brussels, Belgium and the United States. Currently, in addition to his work in Niagara Falls, Dr. Taylor is involved in the development of a comprehensive ophthalmic centre in Toronto.

"What is exciting now in refractive laser eye surgery is the safety of the procedure and the range of treatment options now available for patients. It is rare that a patient cannot benefit from refractive surgery" says Dr. Taylor. "The greatest development in recent years has been the use of the femtosecond laser for the creation of the flap upon which the lasik procedure is based. Not only does this create a thinner and more uniform flap which leads to better optical outcomes, it alleviates the need for a blade and cutting microkeratome which was for many patients the biggest hurdle preventing them from having refractive lasik surgery. The safety factor is so great, I no longer utilize the microkeratome blade in lasik eye surgery". Dr. Taylor has extensive experience on several laser platforms. "While we started with

the Bausch and Lomb platform in 1999, the industry has moved forward to provide greater customization for the unique optical errors of each individual patient. At Lasik ProVision, we have the Wavelight Allegretto platform but we are increasingly shifting to the Zeiss Meditec MEL 80 platform with the Visumax femtosecond laser. "This platform in my belief delivers the optimal reshaping of the cornea to maintain the natural corneal shape for optimal optical correction and customization. Zeiss laser Blended Vision is unique in the treatment of presbyopia or "reading glasses vision". It is the only excimer laser platform that predictably increases the range of vision so patients can see at near, intermediate and far without the loss of stereovision. This is truly exciting. Previously, and on other laser platforms, we could only treat with monovision with one eye corrected for far and one eye corrected for distance. This left patients with a loss of intermediate vision and reduced stereoacuity. It worked, but Zeiss Laser Blended Vision works so much better."

What is the future of refractive surgery? "The future is continuing to refine the refractive outcome with ever safer and less invasive procedures. I am very excited that within the next year, we will begin to fully utilize the femtosecond laser's potential, going beyond the creation of better flaps to conducting the entire laser procedure within the cornea without a flap. This may sound like science fiction, but it is a reality and I am honoured that Zeiss has chosen to partner with Lasik ProVision in Niagara Falls to bring this technology to North America. To obtain additional information or to book your FREE consultation please contact our refractive counselors at 1-888-510-2020 or 905-371-3217 You may visit our website at www.lasikprovision.com

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Fire hall not for discussion yet

LAURA BARTON
Postmedia Network

Township council chambers in Wainfleet were packed last Tuesday night as residents waited to hear discussion about a report that proposed changes to the fire department.

The concern was council would approve this 220-page report with 44 recommendations, one of which was closing Fire Hall No. 4, without further discussion because it was unclear what the term "in principle" meant.

"Approved in principle" means that the general intent of the report is endorsed by council," chief administrative officer Michael Smith said, "but that individual recommendations within the jurisdiction of council come back for individual approval."

He said the details of the recommendations and how the township would plan address them could not be

pushed through without first going through council. By the report being approved in principle, Smith said staff can now investigate each of the matters and explore the options and alternatives.

"Each of those requires an independent report from staff to (approve them)."

Despite this reassurance from the chief administrative officer, there was still some unrest among the aldermen.

Ald. Ted Hessels and Richard Dykstra in particular had many questions for Smith and fire Chief Kevin Foster.

One of Dykstra's questions was about how well Foster knew the fire department and its people to endorse this sort of report. Since Foster is still new to the position, Dykstra wanted to make sure the chief had done his "due diligence."

"I believe that the structure that has been proposed

and is being recommended is something that is suitable for the organization," Foster said. "I'd say it's consistent with what you would see typically across the province in other jurisdictions."

Echoing Smith, Foster said this is just a report and there is still time for discussion.

Hessels wanted the fire master plan implementation committee to have a chance to review the report and give its own recommendations. His concern is a third-party consulting group won't understand the functionality of the department the way township residents would.

However, Mayor April Jeffs said, "We hire a consultant because we don't have the expertise in house to ... kind of get into the nitty gritty and really sort things out."

Story continued on Page 16



LAURA BARTON/POSTMEDIA NETWORK

Residents of the township of Wainfleet gather into council chambers on Tuesday night to hear council discussion concerning a report that suggests closing Fire Hall No. 4 in Wellandport.


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From page 3

Despite a perception that the majority of people are against plans to close hospitals in Welland, Port Colborne, and Fort Erie and replace them all with a new hospital in Niagara Falls, Stewart said "the data we're getting in is saying there's a huge upswing in terms of support of the direction of Niagara Health."

"I think the majority understand that," he said. "And when people experience the change that has happened over the last several years, they do understand. They do see that their care is better and we're partnering to continue to make it better."

Fundraising is one of several topics discussed during the meeting that also included discussions about transportation challenges

and emergency services.

Smith said Niagara paramedics provide care "of the highest quality in the province" while ensuring patients are transported to hospitals where they receive the care they need.

"If it takes a little more time to get to a site that is going to get you the necessary intervention right at the onset, that would be the first choice," Smith said.

Jaeger said paramedics provide "pre-hospital care" due to increased training that they receive.

"Certainly now when a patient gets to an emergency department after having been transported by one of Kevin's team, they already have had probably the first 20 minutes of intervention that would have been done in the emergency department if we dialed back 10 or 20 years

ago," she said.

"That transport time to hospital is not wasted time," Stewart said. Paramedic services are part of a "hospital without walls."

"It's very important that people think that just getting to a site with bricks and mortar is going to be an answer to a problem. It's not," he said, adding that patients also need to be transported to the most appropriate hospital for the treatment they need.

"I know of no research that has shown that getting to a centre that does low volume of care, for example a low number of hips or heart attacks or whatever it is, gives better care than getting to a centre that does higher volume of specialized care," he said.

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Councillor wants public input on landfill site

FROM PAGE 6

Grimaldi was also concerned about spending money on studying the feasibility of "something that may not happen."

"I don't know that I can support this because in my mind, we shouldn't even be discussing it right now," she said. "I think we're putting the cart before the horse again, and I'm not willing to do that."

Ward 4 Coun. Pat Chiochio said the plan initially was to let residents decide on the future use of the landfill site.

"I know that the end result would be that the public would decide what would be there," he said.

Mayor Frank Campion agreed that determining the future use of the site "should include some public consultation."

While some people might be interested in a BMX track, "it might not be the community's vision or council's vision of what's going to happen out there."

Campion said there was also a concern that the cap of the closed landfill site could be disturbed by allowing BMX bikes to use it.

Ward 3 Coun. John Chiochio said he'd rather keep that \$40,000 in the reserve fund to deal with losses incurred by the Youngs Sportsplex.

Pat Chiochio said the city shouldn't need to spend the money to determine the use of that property.

"I think we should have a public process as we've stated all along and get them involved in what should go there," he said. "There have been several ideas: hiking,

BMX, there are different ideas that could go out there."

"It should be part of the public process, and I don't think we need \$40,000 to do that."

Zorbas said the money would be used to help staff with the public engagement process.

While staff from Walker Environmental would be involved as well, Zorbas said the city could also bring in "professional expertise to help with a visioning exercise with the community."

He called it "a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity and we should really try to get some experts in terms of recreation uses that could be put on there."

Ward 5 Coun. Rocky Letourneau was concerned about the potential of harmful elements that could be in the landfill area that could have an impact on future uses of the site.

Zorbas said that would be determined through the proposed study.

Councillors will consider funding the study at an upcoming meeting.

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Possible changes to fire hall causes community concern

FROM PAGE 11

She said the small staff the township has also plays a part in this kind of outsourcing.

President of the volunteer fire fighters association, Gord Davies, said he still felt uneasy after council's discussion.

"The whole thing kind of scares me, the 'in principle,' he said. "I've seen things approved in principle before and before you know it, it's like everything's done. We were supposed to all have input, nobody did."

Davies continued by saying he will stay on top of this matter to make sure items important to the department don't get overlooked.

Another issue brought was the recommendation of three assistant fire chiefs.

Ald. Betty Konec was concerned about the cost involved

in implementing these positions. She asked if there were current numbers for what the volunteers were getting paid to compare to what is being proposed.

"I just want to know if we're adding an extra \$34,800 to that figure," she said.

Foster said the agreement with the association defines the pay rates and some of the rates have already been established within the association even though the roles were not filled. Because they're not filled, he said, there is an offset.

Davies also had concerns about this, saying this proposed management plan would cost more.

At Konec's request, Foster will be submitting a report sometime within the first quarter that outlines a five-

year business plan addressing this, committees suggested in the report and also the fire hall.

The vote to approve the report wasn't unanimous, but council did approve the report in principle.

"Some of these recommendations are going to take a few years to be implemented," Smith said. "Some are going to be quick, some are going to talk a long conversation with stakeholders, community engagement, there's going to be some budget implications, so these things don't happen overnight."

Fire Hall No. 4, which was one of the concerns, is at least a year or two away from even being discussed, Smith said.

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Fundraiser honours plane crash victim

MARYANNE FIRTH
Postmedia Network

Rifat Tawfig spent his life giving back to others.

In his death, the family and friends of the 25-year-old Niagara Falls man have come together to honour him by continuing that legacy.

Tawfig, an instructor with St. Catharines Flying Club, was one of three young men from Niagara who died in an Oct. 16 plane crash in mountainous northern Pennsylvania.

Also killed were students Ben Jeffries, 19, of Niagara-on-the-Lake, and Corey Mijac, 18, of St. Catharines.

The trio was returning from a trip to Myrtle Beach, S.C., with the St. Catharines Flying Club when the U.S. Federal Aviation Administration lost radio contact with the plane.

Wreckage of the aircraft, a small Piper PA-28 Cherokee, was discovered by search-and-rescue crews the following day.

After news of the tragedy broke, a GoFundMe campaign was created by one of Tawfig's close friends to see a well built in his name in Sudan, where his family is originally from.

In only two days, the online fundraiser received enough support to surpass its \$10,000 goal.

The target has since been increased to \$15,000, which as of last Wednesday afternoon was only \$150 shy of being achieved.

Ahmed Daoud, a long-time friend of Tawfig, said their families have been close since both moved to Canada from Sudan in the early 1990s.

He was always moved by Tawfig's willingness to help others and to do what he could to contribute to the close-knit Sudanese commu-



Ben Jeffries.

FACEBOOK PHOTO

nity.

"He was just a great guy. If anybody needed a ride, even if he was going the opposite way, he would take them," Daoud said. "He would never say no."

"He always put people ahead of himself."

As a child, Tawfig had an unabashed love for planes.

"When he was younger, he always wanted to be a pilot," Daoud recalled.

It was through Daoud's father, a former pilot, that he got his first introduction to the world of flight.

He would often come asking for advice about potential paths to take that would lead to him becoming a commercial pilot for a large airline.

It was as a result of those discussions with Daoud's father that Tawfig pursued a

position as a flight instructor with the St. Catharines Flying Club.

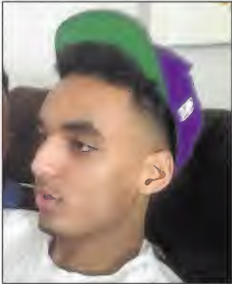
With about 400 flying hours under his belt, he hoped to accumulate enough time in the sky to achieve his dream of working for Saudi Arabian Airlines.

His parents, while originally from Sudan, are currently living in the Middle East nation.

It was Tawfig's sense of adventure that Daoud believes drew him to aviation.

That dream didn't come without hesitation from his parents, who had hoped he'd take a path similar to his father and pursue a career in medicine.

But those concerns were cast aside when they realized Tawfig was not only happy,



SUPPLIED PHOTO

Rifat Tawfig.

but also quite skilled at being behind an aircraft's controls.

Tawfig and his mother were extremely close, Daoud said.

"Every time he flies, he calls her."

The day of the crash was no exception.

When the aircraft made a routine fly stop in Richmond, Va., Tawfig made sure to pick up the phone and dial his mother.

"He said, 'Mom, just pray for me. There's some bad weather in the area. Pray for me that everything will be OK,'" Daoud said.

When his mother learned sometime later that Tawfig's plane had disappeared from radar, she immediately booked a flight to the U.S.

The crash is being investigated by the U.S. National Transportation Safety Board.

Daoud said the family, including Tawfig's parents and three sisters, has been "trying to hold up," but is understandably having a hard time coping with the loss.

"He was so close to his family. Everybody, they were proud of him. His dad was really proud of him."

The Sudanese community, members of the local mosque in St. Catharines and members of the flying club have been a strong source of support, he said.

Condolences, as well as donations, have poured into the GoFundMe page in Tawfig's name, created by close friend Mawia Janoudy.

On the website, Janoudy, who did not immediately respond to requests for comment, describes Tawfig as "one of the most patient and

considerate people I have ever known."

He reminisced about experiences the pair had shared over the years, and about how they said their future children would someday play together.

"You died doing the job that you love," Janoudy wrote. "I'm proud to have grown alongside such a gentle and patient soul."

"Let us strive to be better people in Rifat's memory."

The money will be used to build a 45-metre deep well capable of supporting 1,000 families with water daily for the next 15 years. It will be built by Muslim Aid, a U.K.-based charity.

Funds exceeding the initial goal will be used to support other well projects in Ghana, Pakistan and Bangladesh.

To donate to the GoFundMe page, visit www.gofundme.com/rifatatawfig-sadaga.

A funeral service was held for Tawfig at the St. Catharines mosque on Geneva Street Wednesday, followed by a burial at the Islamic Cemetery on Yokom Road in Niagara Falls.

Services were also held last Wednesday for Jeffries and Mijac at George Darie Funeral Home in St. Catharines.

In a statement provided by Daoud, Tawfig's family extended gratitude to Niagara Regional Police, the Sudanese-Canadian community in Niagara, Sudanese Community Association of Ontario, Islamic Society of St. Catharines and the St. Catharines Flying Club for their concern and support.

The family also "sent out their deep condolences to the families of the other two young men," he said.

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